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Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources

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Economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan

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Note by the Secretary-General

In its resolution 1999/53 of 29 July 1999, entitled "Economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan", the Economic and Social Council requested the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session, through the Council, a report on the implementation of the resolution. The General Assembly, in its resolution 54/230 of 22 December 1999, reiterated the request for a report. The annexed report, which has been prepared by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), is submitted in response to the two resolutions.

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Annex

Report prepared by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

I. Introduction

1. At its substantive session, the Economic and Social Council adopted, on 29 July 1999, resolution 1999/53 on the economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan. The resolution, *inter alia*, stressed the importance of the revival of the Middle East peace process on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973, and 425 (1978) of 19 March 1978, and the principle of land for peace as well as the full and timely implementation of the agreements reached between the Government of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people. It also stressed the need to preserve the territorial integrity of all of the occupied Palestinian territory and to guarantee the freedom of movement of persons and goods in the territory, including the removal of restrictions on going into and from East Jerusalem, and the freedom of movement to and from the outside world. The resolution also stressed the vital importance of the operation and construction of the Gaza airport, the seaport in Gaza and safe passage to the economic and social development of the Palestinian people. The resolution called upon Israel to cease its measures against the Palestinian people, particularly the closure of the occupied Palestinian territory, the enforced isolation of Palestinian towns, the destruction of homes and the isolation of Jerusalem. The resolution reaffirmed the inalienable right of the Palestinian people and the Arab population of the occupied Syrian Golan to all their natural and economic resources and called upon Israel not to exploit, endanger or cause loss or depletion of those resources. It also reaffirmed that Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and the occupied Syrian Golan, were illegal and an obstacle to economic and social development. In the resolution, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit a report on its implementation to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session, through the Economic and Social Council.

2. In its resolution 54/230 of 22 December 1999, the General Assembly took note of the report of the Secretary-General on the economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, occupied since 1967, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan.[1] It reaffirmed the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and the population of the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources, including land and water; and called upon Israel, the occupying Power, not to exploit, to cause loss or depletion of or to endanger the natural resources in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan. In the resolution the Assembly recognized the right of the Palestinian people to claim restitution as a result of any exploitation, loss or depletion of, or danger to, their natural resources, and expressed the hope that the issue would be dealt with in the framework of the final status negotiations between the Palestinian and Israeli sides. It also requested the Secretary-General to submit a report to the Assembly at its fifty-fifth session. The present report responds to the two above-mentioned resolutions.

II. Economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation

A. Occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem

3. The delays in the implementation of the agreements reached between Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), the fact that those agreements are not usually fully implemented and Israeli practices, particularly with regard to settlement expansion and to the closure of passage routes from areas controlled by the Palestine Authority to Israel, continue to aggravate the living conditions of the Palestinian people.

4. On 23 October 1998, Israel and the PLO agreed in the Wye River Memorandum to a revised timetable for the phased implementation of the first and second further redeployments of Israeli military forces as outlined in the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement

on the West Bank and Gaza (Oslo II). The Sharm el-Sheikh Memorandum on implementation of the timetable of outstanding commitments of agreements signed and the resumption of permanent status negotiations was signed on 4 September 1999. The new format splits into three parts Israeli redeployments that were to have occurred, according to Wye in two phases, and according to Oslo II, in one phase. From 10 to 13 September 1999, 7 per cent of the West Bank was transferred from Area C status, where Israel retains exclusive security control to Area B status, where Israel retains overriding security responsibility. On 20 January 2000, an additional 3 per cent was transferred from Area C to Area B status, with an additional 2 per cent moving from Area B to Area A status, where Palestinians have complete authority for civilian security. The third redeployment phase was scheduled for 20 January 2000, but postponed. On 19 March 2000, the Israeli cabinet approved the third and last stage of Israeli redeployment undertaken during the interim period set forth in the Oslo II accords. The transfer of 5.1 per cent from Area B status and 1 per cent from Area C status to full Palestinian control was implemented on 21 March 2000.[2] Wye makes no mention of a date or the territorial extent of the third redeployment called for in Oslo II that was to have been implemented in October 1997, nor does the Sharm el-Sheikh agreement.[3]

5. The bulk of the transfers from Area C outlined in the Sharm el-Sheikh Memorandum — all but 100-200 square kilometres of a scheduled 600 square kilometres — is located in the Nablus-Jenin region and south of Hebron. Although neither area is heavily populated by settlers, they comprise part of the heartland of the occupied Palestinian territory. The territory to be surrendered to Palestinian civil control in the Nablus region is much less problematic from the settlers' perspective than comparable transfers around Ramallah would have been. With few exceptions, settlements in affected areas will be connected by bypass roads, either existing or planned, to main transport routes to Israel. Twelve new bypass roads, costing $70 million, are in various stages of planning and construction. In addition, new Israeli military bases are being established throughout the West Bank, according to the Israeli newspaper *Yediot Aharanot*, "particularly next to isolated settlements. The intention is not to leave isolated settlements in the heart of Palestinian areas without an army base nearby. The camps to be established, therefore, will separate the territory under Palestinian control from the settlements."

6. Civilian Israeli settlements have been built at some 200 sites seized by civilian and military bodies representing the Government of Israel as well as by Israeli civilians empowered by Israel to undertake such activity. The land under exclusive Israeli control amounts to 60 per cent of the West Bank (Area C) and 20 per cent of Gaza. In addition, 30 per cent of the area of East Jerusalem is under effective Israeli ownership. Israel has established approximately 170 settlements in the West Bank with a civilian population of approximately 190,000. There are approximately 200,000 Israeli residents in East Jerusalem and 7,000 settlers live in 16 settlements in Gaza. In the Golan Heights, 17,000 settlers reside in 33 settlements. By the end of 2000, more than 400,000 Israelis will be living in over 200 communities established since 1967 in the West Bank, East Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip and the Golan Heights.[4]

7. The geographic distribution of settlements on the occupied Palestinian territories severely restricts the growth of Palestinian communities. According to an Amnesty International report, the Oslo Accords have created 227 separate areas under Palestinian control. Of these areas 190 measure less than 2 square kilometres. While only 40,000 Palestinians live within Area C, under exclusive Israeli military and civil control, all Palestinians live within 6 or less kilometres of it. The Amnesty International report states that since Oslo, all the 200 applications for building permits in Area C have been rejected.[5]

8. Regarding the future of Israel's settlement population of 200,000 in the West Bank (193,000) and Gaza (7,000), according to *Ha'aretz* the new Israeli Prime Minister noted that the settlements of "Alfe Menache, the Etzion Bloc, Ariel, Nirit, the Corridor, the Jordan Valley settlements, and many more places are part of the State of Israel, now and in the permanent agreement."[6] As to territorial settlement with the Palestinians, the principles underlying such a settlement are broad: "united Jerusalem under Israeli sovereignty; no return to the 1967 borders; no foreign army west of the Jordan River; most of the Judea and Samaria settlers — not even most of the settlements — to remain under our sovereignty in the permanent arrangement; a defence and settlement presence in the Jordan Rift Valley."[7] "As for the borders, it would naturally make no sense to draw them prematurely. The

borders will be determined in the permanent-status talks."[8]

9. In an on-site survey of settlement expansion carried out by Peace Now in May 1999, 6,500 housing units were under construction in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, a 14 per cent increase compared to May 1998.[9] According to *Ma'ariv*, the Ministry of Housing approved a plan for the construction of 1,800 dwelling units in the West Bank adjacent to the East Jerusalem settlement suburb of Neve Ya'acov. The new construction will form a territorial link between the settlements of East Jerusalem and the West Bank settlement of Adam. *Ma'ariv* also reported that the area will be annexed to Jerusalem upon the completion of construction.[10] Other construction in the area includes 450 units in Tel Zion (out of 1,000 approved) and 300 in Adam.

10. Settlements continued to expand during the first months of the new Government. The Ministry of Housing issued tenders for the construction of 3,196 new units in the West Bank and Gaza Strip settlements, excluding East Jerusalem, during the first six months of Mr. Barak's government, a rate higher than annual averages.[11] In December 1999, Mr. Barak announced a temporary halt in the issuance of new tenders for settlement housing construction. This prohibition does not, however, extend to scores of smaller settlements.

11. According to Peace Now, between 15 October and 13 December 1999, the Israeli Government approved building plans for 2,757 new dwellings in six West Bank settlements, the "deposit" of plans for an additional 2,139 units, and the placement of 85 mobile homes in settlements.[12] At the end of February 2000, there were more than 7,120 units in various stages of construction, enough to increase the settler population in the West Bank and Gaza Strip by 30,000. Thousands of others have already been approved and await only a decision by contractors to begin construction. There are no restrictions on settlement expansion in East Jerusalem, where construction at Jebel Abu Ghneim and at Ras al Amud, among other locations, proceeds apace.[13] The five-year plan of the Ministry of Housing calls for the construction of 12,000 new dwelling units in West Bank settlements, including 3,000 in Ma'ale Adumim, 2,000 in Kiryat Sefer, and 1,500 in Ariel.[14]

12. The relative attractive value available in settlements is the product of a number of factors: the classification of settlements as Development Area A, which entitles them to the highest level of public subsidy, including 50 per cent of the land costs; the low profit margins accepted by Amana, the construction arm of the settlement movement Gush Emunim, and by settlement-based contractors; and less stringent building codes than apply in Israel. Construction costs of $500 to $600 per square metre result in selling costs of only $700 per square metre, far less expensive than similar charges in central Israel. Despite early indications that he might do so, Prime Minister Barak has not changed the preferential access of many settlements and settlement-based industrial enterprises to state benefits and subsidies.[15]

13. The confiscation of lands declared by Israel as "state land" as a prelude to their transfer to Israeli control has a critical impact upon the Palestinian community. During 1999, Israel took formal possession of 40,178 dunams of Palestinian land, of which 19,691 dunams were used for settlement expansion and the establishment of new settlements, and 16,657 dunams were used to build new bypass roads. Projects to build nine additional roads which will require about 10,875 dunams were approved. Six new bypass roads are to be built covering 5,782 dunams. An additional 7,550 dunams were levelled; 15,180 trees, mostly olive, almond and fig trees, were uprooted or burnt.[16]

14. Settlement expansion exacts immediate costs to nearby Palestinian communities. Israeli settlers residing in Efrat, a city that has been built in part on lands belonging to Al Khader, are making rapid progress in paving a road that will connect Efrat with Herndon to the east. The road will use the sole land reserves of several Arab villages, as well as Bethlehem's land reserves. However, the villages are forbidden to construct a hothouse or sheep-shed or even to plant a tree beyond the boundaries of the Area B land allotted to them.[17] The joint Israeli-Palestinian Civilian Affairs Committee met on 27 May 1999 to hear complaints of Palestinians from the Jordan Valley village of Nu'ema who charged that settlers from nearby Na'ami had placed mobile homes and a water tower on their agricultural land. Israel maintains that the disputed land is "state land."[18]

15. The Palestinian Centre for Human Rights reported on 25 August 1999 that settlers from Netzarim in the Gaza Strip established a 450 metre-long water pipe from their settlement to a piece of land (estimated at 500 dunams) located to the south of the settlement, thereby paving the way to expand the borders of

Netzarim to the south. The move was the latest in a series of expansions to Netzarim since the signing of the Oslo Accords. The military post situated on the western side of Netzarim has also been expanded. Construction activities include the construction of a synagogue and 35 additional houses. The future port of Gaza, where construction is scheduled to begin in March 2000, will be built on the beachfront south of Gaza City, three kilometres from the settlement.[19]

16. LAW (Palestinian Society for the Protection of Human Rights and the Environment) reported that during 1999, Israel demolished 93 homes, barracks and water reservoirs in various Palestinian areas, including 53 houses and barracks, 7 agricultural nurseries, 8 stores, 10 reservoirs and water wells, and 6 walls. These properties were distributed as follows: 33 in Jerusalem, 17 in Bethlehem, 15 in Nablus, 10 in Hebron, 7 in Ramallah, 7 in Khan Yunis, 3 in Jenin and 1 in Kalkilya.[20]

17. According to LAW's documentation, during 1999, 460 Palestinians received notifications that their houses or barracks or other facilities would be demolished. Most of these properties are located in Jerusalem and Hebron. Two of the buildings threatened for demolition are used as mosques, one of them is located in Ras al-Amud in Jerusalem and the other in the village of al-Walajeh in Bethlehem. Three schools in Ramallah, Jenin and Hebron are also threatened with demolition.[21] Israeli forces also on occasion prevent residents from cultivating the land adjacent to their houses. Many people were detained because of their attempts to cultivate their own land. Moreover, water supplies to their neighbourhood were cut off.[22]

18. On 5 May 1999, 16 military orders were issued, declaring that any person entering lands in 69 villages in the West Bank would be prosecuted under Israeli military laws.[23] In November 1999, Israeli authorities notified citizens from Jaloud and Qaryout villages in the Nablus area of their intention to confiscate their lands in order to expand the Rahalim settlement. According to the Legal Centre for Lands Defence, the area of land in that region, which Israel claims as state land, is estimated at 2,306 dunams.[24]

19. Bypass roads are built with a safety buffer of 50 to 100 metres on either side, where all Palestinian residential and commercial construction is prohibited. "Existing Palestinian houses located in areas close to planned bypass roads," noted a recent study by a Palestinian researcher, "are being systematically demolished. The bypass roads are estimated to reach 425 km. With the safety buffer zone they enjoy, the construction of these bypass roads requires the confiscation and destruction of approximately 109,000 dunams of Palestinian land, most of which is agricultural, depriving owners of their main source of income."[25]

20. Even though Israel continues to retain security control of Area B and the access roads to settlements in close proximity to areas under Palestinian control, the security of these settlements remains impaired. A few settlements such as Sanur west of Jenin, which is already almost empty, are not likely to survive as civilian settlements. In this regard, a former head of Israeli military intelligence noted that protecting access roads to these settlements will be a constant source for provocations and conflict and the example of Netzarim in the Gaza Strip is most frequently recalled in this context. All travel from this isolated settlement proceeds under IDF escort. Yet the population of this isolated outpost has grown from 60 people to more than 400 in recent years.[26]

21. During 1999, seven Palestinians were killed by the Israeli occupying forces, one by the Israeli police, two by settlers and three workers died after being crushed by cars. Two people died in Israeli prisons, two others were killed as a result of the eruption of land mines and another two died from injuries suffered during the intifada.[27]

22. The list of isolated settlements appearing in the February 2000 IDF planning map contains few surprises to anyone familiar with the principles guiding Israel's successive redeployments. Kfar Tapuach, which now sits astride one of the most vital transportation junctions in the West Bank, may be marginalized when a new road linking Ariel with the settlement of Rachelim, south of Tapuach, is completed. Inclusion of the Allon Road settlements of Rimonim and Kochav Ha Shahar is said to suggest an Israeli willingness to establish a secure Palestinian corridor between the Ramallah region and Jericho. The Allon Plan, devised within weeks of the 1967 war, outlined such a corridor along the Ramallah-Jericho road. Today, IDF planners appear ready to consider a 5-6 kilometre-wide corridor running across the Allon Road where the settlements of Rimonim and Kochav Ha Shahar are now located. There are, however, ways

of establishing such a corridor without impacting either of these two settlements.[28]

23. Both Prime Minister Barak and Deputy Minister of Defence Ephraim Sneh denied that the settlements on the list are marked for evacuation, but settlement leaders, who convened an emergency meeting to discuss the issue, assume that is just what is on offer. "Whoever splits the country also splits the people of Israel," declared one settlement leader, "and this is what seems to be happening now by those examining planning options."[29] Peace Now was less circumspect, noting that "the published list proves that the government of Israel recognizes the principal of evacuating settlements in return for peace."[30]

24. In East Jerusalem, Israel has expropriated more than 5,845 acres of mostly Palestinian-owned land — one third of East Jerusalem — for the construction of 10 major Israeli settlement neighbourhoods. These areas, with a population approaching 200,000, ring almost the entire northern, eastern and southern perimeter of the city.[31] *Ha'aretz* reported on 2 March 1999 that of 201 demolition orders issued by the Ministry of Interior in 1998 for Palestinian properties in East Jerusalem, only 9 were implemented. The municipality destroyed 13 additional homes. Palestinians requested 320 building permits, of which 254 were granted.[32]

25. The Jerusalem municipality estimates that it will cost $180 million to bring infrastructure in the Palestinian areas of East Jerusalem to the prevailing standard in West Jerusalem. The 1999 municipal budget allocated $100,000 for the planning of settlement areas in East Jerusalem, a 25 per cent increase over the 1998 development budget. At least $20 million was to be spent on improving major new roads in East Jerusalem, facilitating movement between the city, the coastal region, and Greater Jerusalem settlements.[33]

26. The number of Palestinians holding Jerusalem identity documents issued by Israel is generally believed to number almost 200,000, which would put the Palestinian percentage in the entire city — West and East — at 30 per cent. The census, however, along with other investigations undertaken by Palestinian officials at Orient House, suggests that the number of Palestinians actually residing in the city is half that number, or approximately 100,000. In addition, there are 30,000 Palestinians without Jerusalem documents who currently reside in the city, as well as 20,000 who live in the West Bank villages, such as Anata, that are considered to be within Jerusalem's municipal borders. Palestinians with Jerusalem documents who live outside Palestine number 50,000.[34]

27. According to figures compiled in the *Statistical Yearbook of Jerusalem*, Israel's share of the population in East Jerusalem was much smaller than the Palestinian share in 1972, but it increased steadily until 1986, when the two groups were almost equal. Since 1986, however, there has been a small, fluctuating Palestinian majority in East Jerusalem, based upon the number of Palestinians entitled by Israel to residency in East Jerusalem.[35]

28. According to a study by the Badil Resource Centre for Palestinian Refugee Rights, 8 per cent of Jerusalem residents are forced to leave Jerusalem and reside in the West Bank every year owing to Israeli discriminatory measures in the city. The number of Jerusalemites and their descendants forced to leave their city since 1948 is 480,000, the study reported. In addition, prior to the 1948 war, Palestinians owned 80 per cent of lands in Jerusalem. Today, only 6,000 dunams, or 7.3 per cent of the East Jerusalem is Palestinian-owned. That number decreases to 4.3 per cent if the entire Jerusalem area is taken into account (al-Quds).[36]

29. The revocation of residency rights of Palestinians in Jerusalem continues to be a problem. By the beginning of November, five months after the formation of Mr. Barak's government, complaints continued to arrive in the offices of civil rights organizations in Jerusalem. More than 100 Palestinians complained that they had received notices from the Interior Ministry in East Jerusalem informing them that they had lost their residency rights.[37]

30. Many of the requests of those who had appealed in the past to register births and marriages went unfulfilled, while the requests of those who asked to have their confiscated identity cards returned were ignored.[38] Many Arabs living in East Jerusalem do not have identity cards for numerous reasons. According to different estimates, the situation applies to thousands of Arab families whose registration in the city has not been set in order. For example, there are couples of whom one person is not a resident of Jerusalem; their children, therefore, are also not registered as permanent residents of Israel. These children are not eligible to

study in Jerusalem schools or to receive medical care. Another typical case involves a man who does not have an Israeli identity card and who therefore cannot legally live with his wife and children.[39]

31. According to LAW, during 1999, three Palestinians were killed in the city and the residency rights of 393 Palestinians were revoked, increasing the number of Palestinians whose residency rights had been revoked to 3,309 since 1987. Israel demolished 33 constructions during 1999 in addition to tens of demolition warnings received by Palestinians in the city.[40]

32. Construction in East Jerusalem faces many hurdles. Planning measures ban construction of more than three storeys tall in Palestinian neighbourhoods and an extremely difficult and slow process is required for obtaining building permits.[41] On the other hand, land for new construction in 1999 was offered principally in the East Jerusalem settlement communities of Har Homa and Pisgat Ze'ev.[42]

33. An Israeli inter-ministerial committee on Jerusalem recommended that in order to maintain a 70/30 per cent Jewish majority in Jerusalem, Israel needs to build 116,000 new dwelling units in the city for Jews by 2020, an annual rate of 5,500, far higher than is currently the case.[43] In May 1999, settlement construction of 130 units in the East Jerusalem neighbourhood of Ras al-Amud commenced on a 3.5-acre site.

34. The Ministry of Housing approved, according to *Ma'ariv*, a plan for the construction of 1,800 dwelling units in the West Bank adjacent to the East Jerusalem settlement suburb of Neve Ya'acov. The new construction will form a territorial link between the settlements of East Jerusalem and the West Bank settlement of Adam. The newspaper reported that the area will be annexed to Jerusalem upon the completion of construction.[44] Other construction in the area includes 450 units in Tel Zion (out of 1,000 approved) and 300 in Adam.

35. The continuing Israeli occupation is severely affecting and undermining the supply of drinking water to Palestinians. Rainfall in the West Bank amounted to some 220 millimetres (the average at eight measuring stations), while the normal average rainfall is 537 millimetres. While this decline has significantly disrupted the supply and pressure of water resources in villages linked to a running water system, the shortage has most detrimentally affected those villages that are unconnected to a supply network. The West Bank has some 180 unconnected villages, in which close to 300,000 persons live, comprising approximately 20 per cent of the West Bank's Palestinian population. Another group suffering from the drought is the Bedouins living in the West Bank, who number about 20,000 persons.[45]

36. For Palestinians in unconnected villages and for Bedouins, rainfall is the primary source of water for their household needs. In most houses in the occupied Palestinian territory, and particularly in unconnected villages, the residents maintain containers on their roofs and in their yards for the collection of water. Water collected in this way during the winter meets part of their summer needs. These families rely, primarily in the summer, on nearby springs, from which water is collected in canisters and other vessels. The West Bank has more than 500 springs, some of which flow only during the winter. Of those that are active also in the summer, a few are used by Palestinians to meet their household needs. The drought during 1999 clearly reduced the amount of water flowing in these springs and in some instances, even dried them up completely.[46]

37. The overall current water consumption in the West Bank varies between 110 and 115 million cubic meters (mcm) annually and in Gaza it is about 100 mcm a year. These figures have hardly changed since the Israeli occupation in 1967, despite growing water needs due to the nearly 3 per cent population growth, as well as the needs of socio-economic development.[47]

38. Israel has control over the majority of available water in the occupied Palestinian territory. For domestic consumption, the occupied Palestinian territory uses 53 mcm of water, settlements 13 mcm and Israel 520 mcm. For agricultural purposes, while the occupied territory uses 152 mcm of water, Israel uses 1,200 mcm. The settlements use more water than Israel itself. Israel currently consumes 80 per cent of the water in the West Bank.[48] There has been a severe lack of progress in the implementation of the Oslo Agreement, specifically article 40, in which Israel committed to give the Palestinians 28.6 mcm of water immediately after its signature. Until now, they have only given 10 mcm.[49]

39. Israel controls water distribution through control of permits for drinking water networks and for drilling

wells. Israel takes the liberty of tapping into mountain aquifers in times of water shortages while the Palestinians are prohibited to do so, even for agricultural purposes. Another problem Palestinians face is Israel's demolition of water-harvesting storage pools. According to the *Palestine Report*, "For example, in the Hebron areas of Aroub and near the Israeli settlement Kiryat Arba, some farmers tried to build storage tanks to collect rainwater, but the Israeli authorities destroyed them."[50]

40. Palestinians are faced with the growing problem of pollution from water waste coming from Israeli settlements. These settlements dump their wastewater, especially industrial waste, into Palestinian lands. This not only pollutes agricultural lands but also groundwater.[51]

41. Contamination of water resources by residential and commercial development can have a deleterious effect on public health. *Ma'ariv* reported that Palestinian children near prosperous settlements fall ill because they lack water and suffer from poor hygiene.[52] A study by Bethlehem University reported that the water sources of many Palestinian villages are contaminated to a degree that endangers the lives and health of their residents.[53]

42. Tests carried out on the mountain aquifer near Herndon and Beit Fager showed that 60 per cent of the samples contained unsafe levels of bacteria, caused by sewage contamination. In addition, many of the samples also contained nitrates and other organic and industrial impurities known to be hazardous to human health.[54] Water from some 70 springs was found to be unfit for human consumption, but due to the absence of any viable alternative the population continued to use the water for both domestic and agricultural purposes.[55]

43. Israeli's control of the occupied Palestinian territory has had negative repercussions on the environment. There are approximately 260 Israeli-owned industrial concerns in the West Bank. These factories are either located in Israeli-operated industrial zones or inside settlements. Information about these industrial activities is scarce. Some products are identified, but detailed information on quantities produced, labour and waste generated is not available. The major industries within these industrial zones include: aluminium, leather tanning, textile dyeing, batteries, fiberglass, plastics, and other chemical industries.

44. Environmental regulations on soil, air, and water quality, and restrictions on industrial development have generally been far less comprehensive and much less assiduously enforced in the occupied Palestinian territory as compared with Israel itself. Combined with State-subsidized incentives for Israeli concerns to locate to industrial parks in and near settlements, the relative laxity of environmental enforcement and monitoring has, until recently, led to the relocation of polluting Israeli industries into the occupied territories.[56] Another major problem is foreseen by the construction of large quarries near Avnei Hefetz and south of Ofra.[57]

45. Reliable data about waste water generated in the settlements is difficult to obtain. Approximately 4.3 million cubic metres of waste water is generated annually from settlements in the West Bank. A large amount is dumped, untreated, on Palestinian land, creating a health hazard for many communities.[58] On 14 November 1999, Israeli forces prevented Palestinian citizens from erecting a sand barrier in order to stop the flow of waste water from untreated sewage coming from the Kfar Darom settlement in southern Gaza.[59] Thus, the flow of waste water from settlements increases mosquitoes and other insects and contagious diseases, particularly skin disease among children. The amount of waste water spilled into the valley is quite substantial, leading to flooding and overflowing into people's houses, as well as the submersion of thousands of dunams nearby.[60]

46. Palestinian health officials estimate that during the past four years, 66,000 people have been hospitalized with water-pollution-related illnesses, and another 290,000 sought outpatient care. There is no breakdown for cases caused by pollution originating in settlements and that originating in Palestinian areas.[61] Solid wastes from Israeli industrial zones are routinely dumped in Palestinian areas. Wadi Beit Hanoun, for example, is the receptacle for wastes from the nearby Erez industrial zone.[62]

47. A report by Palestinian Ministry of Environment states that, since 1987, Israel dumped solid waste in the Azzoun area near Qalqilia, leading to a marked increase in dangerous diseases such as cancer among the Palestinians in the area. The report reviewed the many attempts to smuggle Israeli solid waste into the Palestinian land. The report also warned against the Israeli attempts to relocate factories causing environmental hazards from within Israel into West

Bank settlements and pointed out that 40 out of the 160 factories in the settlements pose real environmental hazards.[63]

48. Palestinians have traditionally made up the bulk of the work force engaged in the construction and daily maintenance of settlements throughout the occupied territories. Palestinians working in Israeli settlements number between 10,000 and 12,000 in more than 100 Israeli enterprises, including 3,500 in the Erez industrial zone and settlements in Gaza, and 8,500 in industrial parks and settlements in the West Bank, not including those working in the settlement communities of East Jerusalem. The number of such workers has risen by about 50 per cent since the imposition of the closure in 1993, paralleling an increase in Israeli-owned factories in the occupied Palestinian territory.[64] There are another 35,000 Palestinians with permits and another 40,000 Palestinians without permits working in Israel.[65]

49. The macro-economic impact of Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territory is to inhibit investment and growth due to the continued ambiguity of the legal and political situation. There is no basic investment code, nor a settled legal code in the areas controlled by the Palestinian Authority. Moreover, there is no final status agreement with Israel. In fact, "the complex overlay of laws and Israeli military orders in force during the occupation remains in place. This is further aggravated by Israeli-imposed restrictions on the movement of goods, factors of production and people between Israel and the West Bank and Gaza, and between the West Bank and Jerusalem".[66]

50. According to the Wye Memorandum, agreements about the southern "safe passage" route should have concluded within a week of entry into force of the Memorandum, and operation of this route should have begun as soon as possible thereafter. The southern route was opened on 25 October 1999. Passage of Palestinians is, however, effectively restricted by Israeli security protocols.[67] There has been no agreement regarding the opening of the northern passage. The opening of the port of Gaza has been similarly delayed due to security demands by Israel, although work on the three-year project is expected to commence this year. On the other hand, the International Airport in Gaza, under joint Israeli and Palestinian Authority supervision, opened to limited traffic in late 1998. Continuing restrictions on the Palestinian Authority's operation of the facility have contributed to its failure, until now, to make a recognizable contribution to the Palestinian economy.

51. According to LAW, during 1999, the Israeli occupying forces closed all the occupied Palestinian territory including the areas controlled by the Palestinian Authority for 11 days, far fewer than in previous years.[68] However, despite the few days of total closure in 1999, the Palestinian economic situation remains precarious due to limited economic activity. In particular, investment and exports have been stagnant — the two most critical variables for sustainable private sector-led employment growth. Also worrisome was the downward trend in public investment, the result of reduced levels of donor disbursements in 1999.[69]

52. In nominal terms, Palestinian registered exports to Israel amounted to US$ 222.6 million, while registered imports from Israel were $843.5 million in first half of 1999. Palestinian direct registered imports from third countries increased to an estimated $87.4 million, a 43.4 per cent nominal increase in the last year. Higher transaction costs, border and mobility restrictions, limited access to foreign markets, as well as low levels of investment in productivity continue to hinder export development.[70] Political uncertainty about the shape of the permanent status and the still weak legal and institutional environment, particularly from the point of view of foreign capital, constitute continuing obstacles to investment in the occupied Palestinian territory.[71]

53. Beginning in March 2000, Israel imposed a number of restrictions on Palestinian economic transactions, including the suspension of the "convoy system", which allows vehicles from Gaza to pass through Israeli territory under military escort for the purpose of export and import. The Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator in Occupied Territories estimates show that the average number of trucks using the convoy system on a monthly basis in 1999 was 18.6 per cent lower than in 1990 (3,868 versus 4,756, respectively). This includes exports of agricultural products to Israel (and foreign markets via Israel) and imports of a range of commodities from Israel (and foreign products via the Israeli ports). Thus, there is a downward trend in use of the convoy system.[72]

54. Israel announced that from March 2000 it would admit only the passage of persons through the Erez border crossing between Gaza and Israel. Until now

Erez crossing has been used for the passage of vehicles as well. From March, all commercial transactions and passage of goods will be admitted only through the Karni border crossing, located in the east of Gaza. Palestinian vehicles are not allowed to pass through Karni crossing, but instead are forced to unload their product, which must be reloaded into Israeli vehicles after a lengthy security check. Consequently, transportation costs are significantly higher than under the convoy system and is estimated to increase by 100-110 per cent under the new restrictions. The Palestinian Authority will also be unable to tax shipments from Karni.[73] Thus, restrictions on the movement of goods has contributed to further decline in economic growth.

B. Occupied Syrian Golan

55. The Golan Heights, captured from Syria in June 1967, has an extensive, yet comparatively small settlement infrastructure. The 17,000 Israeli settlers, residing in 33 settlements, represent an increase of 18 per cent since 1994. By comparison, the settler population of the West Bank (excluding East Jerusalem) has almost doubled to 200,000 during the same period. This slower pace is in no small part due to the location and small number of Syrians remaining after 1967, clustered in four villages at the plateau's northern tip.[74] Israeli-controlled territory in the occupied Golan, excluding considerable military zones and settlement areas, encompass nature reserves of 24,908 hectares, cultivated areas comprising 8,100 hectares, grazing areas of 46,575 hectares, and 2,531 hectares of orchards.[75] In September 1999, a new settlement, Nimrod, was established. Fewer than 10 families live at the outpost, located 1.5 kilometres from Majdal Shams.[76]

56. In spite of possible evacuation of settlements as part of a peace agreement with Syria, settlement expansion in the Golan Heights is still going on. In April 2000, the Israeli Government authorized the establishment of a tourism project which entails the construction of a 400-room hotel, a commercial centre and a boardwalk at Kursi Junction on the eastern shore of Lake Kinneret, about 5 kilometres north of kibbutz Ein Gev. In addition, a small hotel of 28 rooms is planned near the Hamat Gader hot springs. In the town of Katzrin, the already existing industrial zone is to be expanded. With regard to agriculture in the Golan Heights, the Israeli authorities plan to allocate 1,157 dunams of land in seven settlements.[77] Moreover, 358 new homes will be built in 11 settlements. In the long run, there are plans for 2,500 homes in the four settlements of Had-Ness, Knaf, Gamala and Ramot. In Katzrin, hundreds of homes are under construction; in Ein Zivan, 40 dwellings are being built and in Neot Galan, 55 new dwellings were recently completed.[78]

57. Employment opportunities for the Arab population in the Syrian Golan Heights are extremely restricted, since the movement of the Arab population between the Golan and the Syrian Arab Republic remains problematic. The employment available to the Syrian population in the Golan is limited to unskilled and semi-skilled daily wage labour. In most instances, these workers have no access to social benefits or health insurance, and job security is extremely precarious, with no provision for unemployment compensation. Over and above these concerns, substantial wage differences prevail, to the detriment of the Syrian Arab population of the Golan.[79] Improvement of living conditions is further inhibited owing to measures that restrict the expansion of educational facilities, as well as limit access to education, either in the Syrian Arab Republic or in Israeli colleges.[80]

58. Only about 400 of the approximately 18,000 residents of villages in the northern Golan Heights — Masadah, Majdal Shams, Ein Kiniya and Rajar — agreed to accept Israeli citizenship. Every few months the holders of the Israeli identity cards organize a protest demanding to be permitted to renounce their citizenship — so far unsuccessfully. The boycott extends into almost every sphere of life, from family celebrations to funerals, which the holders of Israeli citizenship are not permitted to attend, and to an absolute ban on greeting them in the street, even by a nod of the head.[81]

59. On 15 February 2000, Syrians in the Golan protested Israel's annexation of the Golan Heights 18 years ago. About 1,000 participated in the demonstration and six were injured by tear gas and rubber-coated bullets fired by Israeli troops.[82]

Notes

[1] A/54/152-E/1999/92, annex.

[2] Foundation for Middle East Peace, *Report on Israeli Settlement in the Occupied Territories* (henceforth referred to as *Report*), March-April 2000, p. 1.

[3] *Report*, September-October 1999, p. 1.

[4] *Ha'aretz*, 2 February 2000; *Ha'aretz*, 28 February 2000; *Ha'aretz*, 21 February 2000.

[5] Amnesty International, *Israel and the Occupied Territories: The Demolition and Dispossession of Palestinian Homes*, December 1999.

[6] *Ha'aretz*, 2 February 1999.

[7] *Report*, July-August 1999, p. 4.

[8] Ibid., p. 1.

[9] *Report*, September-October 1999, p. 5.

[10] *Ma'ariv*, 27 June 1999.

[11] *Ha'aretz*, 23 January 2000.

[12] Peace Now press release, 26 December 1999.

[13] Peace Now press release, "Settlement Situation under the Barak Government", 23 February 2000.

[14] *Report*, September-October 1999, p. 6.

[15] *Report*, May-June 1998, p. 1; *Yediot Aharanot*, 10 December 1999.

[16] LAW (Palestinian Society for the Protection of Human Rights and the Environment), "A Summary of 1999 Annual Report on Human Rights Violations", 18 January 2000.

[17] *Ha'aretz*, 10 February 1999; *Report*, March-April 1999, p. 3.

[18] *Report*, September-October 1999, p. 6.

[19] *Report*, November-December 1999, p. 4.

[20] LAW, "Law Publishes a Summary of its 1999 Annual Report on Human Rights Violations", 18 January 2000.

[21] Ibid.

[22] LAW's Settlement Chronicle, "Escalation of Settlement Activity Since Wye", 2nd report, 18 April 1999.

[23] For details about the orders, see Land Defence Council, e-mail from Issa Samander, head of Land Defence General Committee, 20 January 2000.

[24] *Palestine Report*, published by Jerusalem Media and Communications Centre (JMCC), 17 November 1999.

[25] *Report*, January 1999, p. 11.

[26] Source: interview with Arale Tsur, Chairman of the Hof Aza [settler] Regional Council, 27 February 2000.

[27] Press conference by LAW, 18 January 2000, in Ramallah; LAW, "LAW Publishes a Summary of its 1999 Annual Report on Human Rights Violations", 18 January 2000.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid.

[31] *Report*, May-June 1999, p. 7.

[32] Ibid., p. 4.

[33] Ibid., p. 5.

[34] Ibid., p. 7.

[35] Ibid., p. 8; *Statistical Yearbook of Jerusalem*, 1997: table III/13; 1996: table III/14; 1992: table III/12; 1991: table III/1; and 1982: table III/10.

[36] *Palestine Report*, 25 August 1999.

[37] *Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper* — English Internet edition, 15 January 2000.

[38] Ibid.

[39] *Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper* — English Internet edition, 15 January 2000.

[40] LAW, "LAW's Director Meets with Finnish Minister of Justice", 20 January 2000.

[41] *Report*, May-June 1999, p. 10.

[42] *Ha'aretz*, 11 April 1999.

[43] *Ha'aretz*, 19 April 1999.

[44] *Ma'ariv*, 27 June 1999.

[45] From Betzelem, Water Shortage in the West Bank, Update: Summer 1999, 28 July 1999.

[46] Ibid.

[47] *Palestine Report*, 28 July 1999.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Ibid.

[50] Ibid.

[51] Ibid.

[52] *Middle East Mirror*, 19 October 1999.

[53] *Ha'aretz*, 16 June 1999.

[54] Ibid.

[55] Ibid.

[56] *Report*, November-December 1999, p. 4.

[57] Arutz Sheva News Service, 10 September 1999.

[58] "The Environmental Impact of Jewish Settlements in the West Bank", Violent Qumsieh, *Palestine-Israel Review*, vol. V, No. 1, 1998, p. 3.

[59] *Al-Hayat al-Jadida*, 15 November 1999; *Palestine Report*, 17 November 1999.

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[61] Ibid.

[62] *Palestine Report*, 8 December 1999.

[63] Palestine Ministry of Information, 30 October 1999.

[64] *Report*, September-October 1999, p. 3.

[65] *Ha'aretz*, 10 February 2000.

[66] Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute (MAS), *MAS Economic Monitor*, No. 1 (1997), pp. 2-3.

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[70] Ibid.

[71] Ibid.

[72] Ibid.

[73] *Palestinian Report*, 16 February 2000.

[74] *Report*, November-December 1999, p. 6.

[75] Golan Heights Information Server, *www.golan.org.il*.

[76] *Report*, January-February 2000, p. 6.

[77] *Ha'aretz*, 14 April 2000 (Internet edition).

[78] *Ha'aretz*, 14 April 2000 (Internet edition) and *Report*, November-December, 1999, p. 6.

[79] Report on Israeli Practices Against Human Rights of Syrian Citizens in the Occupied Syrian Golan, by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Syrian Arab Republic, June 1997 (mimeo) (in Arabic), pp. 12-20.

[80] Ibid.

[81] *Ha'aretz*, 1 August 1999.

[82] *Israel Wire*, 15 February 2000.